(a) whether it is a fact that genetically modified foods are entering in our market from abroad;

(b) whether the Ministry of Environment and Forests has not put any restrictions or curbs on import of such harmful food products; and

(c) what safeguards have been prescribed against import of such harmful foods in our country?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) Rule 11 of the Manufacture, Use, Import, Export and Storage of Hazardous Microorganisms/Genetically Engineered Organisms or Cells 1989 notified under Environment (Protection) Act, 1986, provides that foods stuffs, ingredients in food stuffs and additives including processing aids containing or consisting of genetically engineered organisms or cells, shall not be produced, sold, imported or used except with the approval of the Genetic Engineering Approval Committee (GEAC). Thus, import of Genetically modified food requires the approval of GEAC. The GEAC considers the proposals on a case-by-case basis taking into account biosafety aspects including impact on human health.

Action plan for conservation of coastal and marine Environment

1096. PROF. M. SANKARALINGAM: Will the Minister of ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to prepare an action plan for the conservation of coastal and marine environment;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) if not, the reasons therefor; and

(d) the details of achievements made by Government in this field during the last ten years?

THE MINISTER OF ENVIRONMENT AND FORESTS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (d) Ministry of Environment and Forests launched a Scheme for Conservation and Management of Mangroves and Coral Reefs 1986. On the recommendations of the National Committee on Mangroves and Coral Reefs, 30 Mangrove and 4 Coral Reef areas in the country have

been identified for intensive conservation and management. Management Action Plans for all the identified Mangrove and Coral Reef areas were prepared and an amount of Rs. 1317.28 lakhs was released to the State Governments/Union Territories concerned for implementation of these Management Action Plans during the Ninth Five Year Plan. As per the State of Forest Report, 1999 an overall increase of 615 sq. km. of mangrove areas in the country has been reported during the period 1991—1999. The Ministry of Environment and Forests has also launched an All India Co-ordinated Project on Coastal and Marine Biodiversity during the year 1999-2000. Main activities under this project include Survey and Inventorisation, Training and Capacity Building in Taxonomy and Establishment of Database Network on the subject. The Coastal Shelterbelt Plantation Project under Integrated Afforestation and Eco-Development Project Scheme envisages plantation in rows along the coastline to create a shelterbelt for checking soil erosion and sand ingress for protection of agricultural fields, homesteads and roads etc. To conserve and protect the fragile coastal ecosystems, Ministry of Environment and Forests issued Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ) Notification, 1991 under the Environmental Protection Act, 1986. Coastal Zone Management Authorities have been constituted in all the coastal States/Union Territories to ensure implementation of the provisions of the CRZ Notification, 1991. Coral Reefs have been included in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Protection Act, 1972. Sunderbans in West Bengal, Gulf of Mannar in Tamil Nadu and Great Nicobar have been designated as Biosphere Reserves. Department of Ocean Development has also launched a programme on Integrated Coastal and Marine Area Management during the Ninth Plan period.

FPIs in rural areas

†1097. SHRIMATI SAROJ DUBEY: Will the Minister of FOOD PROCESSING INDUSTRIES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are formulating any scheme to set up more and more units of food processing industries based on agriculture in the rural areas, for proper development of the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.